

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 05325 261117Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 SY-05 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 OC-06 CCO-00 /069 W

-----261124Z 122605 /14

R 260931Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 674

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY LEADERS RE CURRENT SITUATION

1. ON APRIL 26 AMBASSADOR NEWSOM MET WITH LEADERS OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN JAKARTA, INCLUDING THOSE CONCERNED WITH NOTIFICATION SYSTEM. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO REASSURE COMMUNITY REGARDING SITUATION DURING "QUIET WEEK" ELECTION DAY AND POST-ELECTION PERIOD. AMBASSADOR FELT THIS MEETING APPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF INCREASING RUMORS WITHIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY REGARDING CLOSURE OF EMBASSY, EVACUATION OF AMERICANS TO SINGAPORE, CLOSURE OF SCHOOL ON ELECTION DAY, (NONE OF WHICH WERE TRUE) ETC. OPENING REMARKS WERE FOLLOWED BY QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD. FOLLOWING IS BRIEF RESUME OF HIS REMARKS.

2. "PURPOSE OF MEETING PRIMARILY ONE OF REASSURANCE. WE ARE IN FINAL STAGES OF INDONESIAN ELECTION PERIOD. THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTED INCIDENTS OF DISTURBANCES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF COUNTRY, WHICH, HOWEVER, NOT UNUSUAL IN A COUNTRY WHERE ELECTIONS RELATIVELY RARE AND FEELINGS SOMETIMES RUN HIGH. INVARIABLY DURING PERIOD LIKE THIS, RUMORS ABOUND WITHIN EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY, FOR EXAMPLE, EMBASSY HAS HEARD THAT SOMEONE PROPOSING THAT ALL

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PAGE 02 JAKART 05325 261117Z

AMERICANS GO TO SINGAPORE, THAT SOME EMBASSIES HAVE ADVISED PEOPLE TO AVOID PUBLIC GATHERINGS. NONE OF THESE RUMORS HAS ANY BASIS IN FACT. IN TIME LIKE THIS, IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION TO AVOID UNJUSTIFIED ALARM AND TO SERVE AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION IN THE EVENT OF TROUBLE. CANNOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE MAY BE INCIDENTS AND MOST CRITICAL PERIODS WILL BE DURING "QUIET WEEK," ON ELECTION DAY OR POSSIBLY IN

CONNECTION WITH PROTESTS WHICH MIGHT FOLLOW ELECTIONS. WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH SECURITY AUTHORITIES WHO, AT PRESENT, DO NOT FORESEE SERIOUS DISTURBANCES. COMMUNITY SHOULD BE REASSURED ON TWO COUNTS. FIRST THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY ANTI-FOREIGN FEELING IN ANY OF INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED, AND THERE SEEMS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT ANY FUTURE INCIDENTS WILL BE DIRECTED AGAINST EXPATRIATES. SECONDLY, EMBASSY HAS A NOTIFICATION SYSTEM ABOUT WHICH AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS BRIEFED. SOME OF THE REPORTS WHICH HAVE CIRCULATED ARISE FROM FACT THAT MANY EMBASSIES, FIRMS AND OTHERS GIVING TIME OFF TO INDONESIAN EMPLOYEES ON ELECTION DAY. THIS IS APPROPRIATE BUT MAY CAUSE SOME ORGANIZATIONS DIFFICULTY IN FUNCTIONING. WE ALSO WISH TO ENLIST COOPERATION OF COMMUNITY DURING PERIOD AHEAD AND WOULD WELCOME BRINGING TO OUR ATTENTION RUMORS OR REPORTS WHICH SHOULD BE CHECKED REGARDING POSSIBLE OR ACTUAL INCIDENTS OR ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT REQUIRE US TO EVALUATE THE WIDER CIRCUMSTANCES."

3. FOREGOING IS GIVEN TO YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION REGARDING EMBASSY'S EVALUATION OF PRESENT SITUATION AND WHAT IT HAS DONE TO CALM RUMOR MILL.

4. WE LEAVE IT TO YOUR JUDGEMENT WHETHER YOU WOULD FEEL IT USEFUL TO HAVE A SIMILAR MEETING WITH LEADERS OF YOUR LOCAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY.
NEWSOM

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